



Connecticut Association of Boards of Education, Inc.

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**Testimony  
Submitted to the  
Planning and Development Committee**

**March 2, 2009**

**SB 371 AN ACT CONCERNING INTERMUNICIPAL COOPERATION**

**SB 384 AN ACT PROMOTING REGIONALISM IN THE STATE**

**HB 6388 AN ACT PROVIDING MANDATE RELIEF TO MUNICIPALITIES**

The Connecticut Association of Boards of Education commends the Planning and Development Committee for their focus on promoting regional efficiencies. In education, the regional educational service centers provide a wonderful example of how efficiencies can be achieved on a regional level, based on the needs of the participating districts. There are some existing obstacles to additional regional efforts, however. Currently one of the regional educational service centers is attempting to solicit bids for transportation services on a regional basis. They have met with opposition from organizations representing transportation providers.

When some boards of education have attempted to solicit bids for insurance coverage on behalf of multiple districts, they have been told that Section 38a-272 of the Connecticut insurance regulations prohibits such joint purchasing. We urge you to explicitly provide in Connecticut's statutes the authority for group purchase of both health insurance and transportation services. A number of the bills before you today could serve as the vehicle to do so, including SB 371, An Act Concerning Intermunicipal Cooperation and SB 384, An Act Promoting Regionalism in the State.

With respect to SB 371, in its current form the provision for negotiation of regional contracts with municipal employers and teacher unions is permissive. We strongly urge you to retain the permissive nature of this proposal, since there is a concern that regional bargaining may yield contracts for some districts that are significantly more expensive than the provisions they have already negotiated locally.

SB 384 establishes a regional collaboration program and seems to require that the plan submitted by the participating municipalities provide for joint activities in all the items enumerated in section 1, which include special education, early childhood programs, and school construction. We urge you to amend this bill to ensure that local and regional boards of education in those

municipalities are specifically included in the planning process, since these are all issues under their jurisdiction.

CABE also supports HB 6388, An Act Providing Mandate Relief to Municipalities. Among other provisions, this bill would suspend binding arbitration for two years, providing immediate relief to communities. CABE strongly supports the provision in section 6 which increases to 10 percent the amount of budget reserve that arbitrators would be prohibited from considering as available to funded arbitration award. The provision in Section 19 makes it clear that two or more "schools" may jointly perform functions that they may perform separately. We urge you to clarify the language to refer to school districts.